

## SEPSEA Dissertation Research Award

The Southeast Postsecondary Education Alliance (SEPSEA) sponsors an annual competition for dissertation research funding. The purpose of the Dissertation Research Award program is to assist doctoral students with research costs associated with inclusive postsecondary education programs. The dissertation research may be in any area related to inclusive postsecondary education research.

**The award is \$1,000, payable directly to the student.**

### **Applicants for the award must:**

1. be majoring in a field associated with inclusive postsecondary education programs, including special education, social work, rehabilitation counseling, or psychology.
2. be in good standing in their graduate programs.
3. be enrolled full-time or working on their dissertation research for an equivalent of full-time enrollment.
4. must have had their dissertation proposals approved by their dissertation committee prior to application.
5. must have not yet successfully defended their dissertations at the time of the application deadline.

### **Application process:**

Applicants must submit the following materials no later than June 30 for funding for the following academic year:

**Cover letter.** One page maximum, describing your research interests and experience, as well as your career plans.

**Dissertation title and brief research summary.** Two-page maximum, including project background and rationale, an explanation of research design (methods, procedure, analysis plan, etc.) and other important aspects of the project.

**Budget.** Detail the need and justify all expenses related to the study. The award must be used to support expenses directly related to dissertation research (e.g., computer time, travel, data analysis, and costs associated with data collection). The awards may not be used for indirect costs, tuition, or consultant fees.

**Abbreviated curriculum vitae.** Two-page maximum

**Letter of recommendation** from your doctoral program dissertation advisor.

Funding decisions will be based on the quality of the submitted information and made by a committee appointed by the SEPSEA chair.

**Preference will be given to research studies that focus on inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) students or programs and address one of the following topic areas of need/interest, as determined by the SEPSEA membership in a 2025 Research Needs Assessment:**

- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Mental health and wellness
- Longitudinal studies; (life after IPSE graduation)
- Federal funding and policy trends impacting IPSE students, including the future of Pell Grants, Workforce Pell, WIOA, and Perkins VI, and their implications for student funding and economic outcomes
- Outcome-based assessment, including evaluation of whether IPSE graduates achieve earnings comparable to or exceeding those of high school graduates in alignment with new federal requirements

No later than one year from receipt of the award, each award recipient must submit a one-page final report letter specifying the status of the dissertation research, including how the funds were used.